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Italy's effort

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" FRENCH HOMAGE "

ITALY'S EFFORT

by

LOUIS BARTHOU

Late First Minister

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Publication of the Committee

" THE EFFORT OF FRANCE
AND OF HER ALLIES "

at

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ITALY'S EFFORT

Ten years ago, M. Anatole France received a visit from a Portuguese savant, Theophilus Braga, and on that occasion he used eloquent and prophetic language which it is of interest to recall to-day. He said: « We must retain, respect and uphold the principle of nationality and the national organizations which, in the present stage of human development, supply us with those forms and shapes that are necessary to society. Let us realize that the breaking-up of free countries and the fall of the intellectual nations from their present position would soon place Latin Europe under a system of barbarous autocracy and would in no way help towards a union of the nations that enjoy liberty. »

No truer or profounder utterance as to the fundamental origin of the war, and as to its character, has been made since the conflict began. On one side, we have free peoples who are fighting for their existence, their independence and their honor, without any desire to predominate over great nations and without any base designs to enslave smaller countries. On the other side, we have predatory nations impelled by a mad, boundless, mercenary and insolent ambition to force a barbaric autocracy on the world.

Among the European nations of the first group are England, Russia and France. Italy claimed the honor of joining them, but there was a difference between her position and theirs.

Germany declared war on Russia.

Russia's object was to save Servia, and she resisted the German attack.

Germany declared war on France.

France, being pacific but conscious of her dignity and strength, resisted the German attack.

Unlike France and Russia, England did not have war declared against her, but she had signed a treaty and she kept faith. Everyone remembers the tragic interview—undoubtedly one of the most tragic interviews that have ever, in the history of humanity, brought two men and two nations face to face—between Herr von Jagow, the German Empire's Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Sir Edward Goschen, British Ambassador in Berlin. The Minister for Foreign Affairs was surprised by England's attitude, which his rather limited amount of psychology had not enabled him to anticipate. He showed astonishment, irritation and something like indignation. He told the representative of Great Britain that it was a matter of life and death for Germany to send her troops through neutral Belgium.

To this the British Ambassador replied calmly and quietly in his subsequent interview with the German Chancellor, but with the force born of dignity, that it was also a question of life and death for the honor of England, and that, where her honor was involved, England could not compromise.

Italy was not attacked, neither was she threatened, at any rate directly. Since 1882 she had been the ally of the Central Empires by virtue of the treaty known as the Triple Alliance. This treaty was signed in 1882 under circumstances which are well known and as the outcome of events which are now matters of history. It was renewed in 1892, 1897, 1902 and 1912; but it was a treaty of a special character.

In his despatch of Dec. 9, 1914, which opened his negotiations with Austria-Hungary, Baron Sonnino, the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, defined and specified the character of this treaty. He described it as a defensive and conservative arrangement for national defence and the maintenance of existing positions. Signor Tittoni, during his six years of

office as Minister for Foreign Affairs, regarded the treaty in the same light. On several occasions he stated most emphatically in the Italian Parliament that the object of the treaty signed by Italy with the Triple Alliance was to maintain the balance of power in the Balkans and the Adriatic, but that it did not prohibit loyal intercourse and friendly relations with other countries. Not only as his country's ambassador to France but as the minister responsible for the foreign policy of his country, Signor Tittoni several times said the Triple Alliance treaty did not exclude cordial relations with England and friendly relations with France. He has invariably remained faithful to this policy.

The main stipulations of the treaty that bound Italy to the two great Central Powers are summed up in three of its clauses, Nos. 3, 4 and 7. As regards intervention, Clause 3 says :

Should one or two of the contracting Powers, without provocation on their part, be attacked by two or several Powers not having signed the treaty and find themselves at war with such Powers, the « *casus fœderis* » (conditions involving joint action by the allies) will arise for all the contracting Powers.

This clause deals with the case of all three Powers being involved in war.

In regard to neutrality, Clause 4 says :

Should any one of the great Powers not having signed the treaty threaten the safety of one of the contracting parties to such an extent as to compel the latter to declare war, the other two contracting parties pledge themselves to observe benevolent neutrality towards their ally. In such a case, either will be free to participate in the war, so as to make common cause with that ally.

Before the war, there were at least two well known occasions on which Italy informed Germany and Austria-Hungary of the exact interpretation she gave to clauses 3 and 4 of the treaty. The first of these occasions was in April 1913, after the events

in the Balkans. At that time, Austria-Hungary was designing to attack Montenegro.

The Duke of San Giuliano was then Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs. Austria's plans caused him considerable uneasiness, and he consulted his predecessor at the ministry, who was then representing his country in Paris. Signor Tittoni replied very frankly and decidedly that any disturbance of the balance between Italy and Austria would affect the treaty of alliance as a whole. Signor Tittoni did not mean to waste his time in comparisons of clause 3 with clauses 4 and 7. Far from disregarding the text of these clauses, he accepted it, and, at the same time, he rose to a higher and more general interpretation. As he said : « Unless Italy's vital interests are maintained, the Triple Alliance will be torn up by the hands of Germany and Austria themselves. »

This firmness caused the Central Empires to give way, but Austria had no idea of stopping short at the first attempt, and she did not even wait until the end of the year 1913 before setting to work again. A few months later, in August, she selected Servia as the object of the same kind of attack which, directed against Montenegro, had been foiled by the firmness of the Italian Government. The Duke of San Giuliano was still Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Prime Minister, Signor Giolitti, was away from Rome at the time. The Duke made his own opinion clear to the Premier, and obtained an expression of the latter's personal views. The two statesmen came to an immediate understanding, and Signor Giolitti himself made the following statement in the Italian Parliament :

« If Austria takes action against Servia, it is evident that the « *casus fœderis* » does not arise. She will be acting for herself, and not in self-defence, as no one has any idea of attacking her. This must be stated most explicitly to Vienna. » This explicit statement was accordingly made to Vienna in August, just as it had already been made in April.

Formal announcements, however, are not enough to stop certain intentions and frustrate certain attempts. A year

elapsed, and then Austria began again, under the circumstances with which everyone is acquainted.

We thus see that, even before Austria-Hungary sent her ultimatum to Servia (following upon the murder of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Serajevo) Italy twice specified her attitude, defined her view of the Triple Alliance, and stated that she would fulfil her obligations but would not go beyond them. Italy maintained her position after the monstrous ultimatum sent by Austria-Hungary to Servia. She expressed her views July 25, immediately after the ultimatum. There was such a series of slanderous attacks on Italy in this matter, in Germany, Austria and even neutral countries, that the best way of meeting it will be to quote texts that cannot have been tampered with, and are to be found in the Allies, diplomatic records.

« Signor Salandra and I » writes the Minister for Foreign Affairs « have pointed out to the Ambassador that, if she intended to observe the spirit of the Triple Alliance, Austria had no right to take the steps she took at Belgrade, without having previously come to an understanding with her allies. The wording of the Austrian note and the claims set forth in it (which, while ineffective against the pan-Servian danger, are extremely offensive to Servia and indirectly to us too) clearly show that Austria wants to bring about a war. We consequently told Count von Flotow that, considering the manner in which Austria was proceeding, and also the defensive and conservative character of the Triple Alliance, Italy did not consider herself obliged to come to the assistance of Austria in case, as the result of her action, she found herself at war with Russia, and that in this event, any European war would be the result of the provocative and aggressive action of Austria. »

On two separate occasions, July 27 and 29, notes were sent to Vienna, in which Italy stated that clause 7 (providing that compensation would be due to Italy if Austria upset the balance of power in the Adriatic or the Balkans) would have to come into operation, and that Italy intended to stand by her rights. In the words of the despatch, Italy said : « If we do

not obtain them (compensations) the Triple Alliance will be shattered beyond repair. »

This was plain and straightforward talk, leaving no room for misunderstanding. All the slanders and distortions of facts are powerless against this record of Italy's attitude.

And the Germans themselves, who have fraudulently distorted the text of treaties and tried to get out of them by altering the spirit of these compacts, who have brought habits of perfidy and felony into diplomatic intercourse—the Germans themselves find it necessary to cover up their own tracks by falsely accusing others of deceit! They have been guilty of every kind of hypocrisy and treachery, and yet they lay these crimes at the door of those who have observed both the letter and the spirit of treaties and have kept their plighted word!

The presence of the Italian Ambassador at the memorable sitting of the French Chamber of Deputies on Aug. 4, 1914, aroused the unanimous and prolonged applause of the assembly. It was known that Italy had informed the Central Empires that she intended to maintain neutrality and had lost no time in claiming that clause 7 of the Triple Alliance should come into force. The French Premier, M. Viviani, speaking from the tribune of the Chamber, made use of language which has taken its place in history. « Italy » he said « acting with a clear conception of the genius of the Latin race, has notified us that she intends to remain neutral. This decision has caused the sincerest joy throughout France. I have expressed it to the Italian Chargé d'affaires by telling him how glad I was that the two Latin sisters, whose origin and ideals are identical, and who have a glorious past as their joint inheritance, will not be opposed to each other. »

Not only were France and Italy not in opposition, but it must be admitted that the neutrality maintained by Italy from August 1914 to May 1915 was of the greatest service to France. We were able, in full confidence and security, to move troops away from our south-eastern frontier. We were

able to send our transports freely across the Mediterranean, and we had no reason to apprehend any conflict between French and Italians in Tripoli. In these three ways Italian neutrality was of great assistance to France, to say nothing of the less important consequences. The negotiations began with Austria in December 1914, and Italy went to war May 20, 1915, but all Italians did not wait until then to come to the help of France and fight in the common cause of justice and right.

In Italy there are some men who bear an illustrious name—one of the most glorious in Italian history: an aged man and some young men who bear the great name of Garibaldi with dignity. The father gave his six sons to France. The sons came and fought on our side. Two of them, Bruno and Santo, fell with French soldiers. Only a poet could do justice to such heroism. Gabriel d'Annunzio, in a speech delivered May 5, 1915, paid a tribute to the dead heroes and pointed out the prophetic significance of their end. « The signs » he said « have come. When the handsomest of the six brothers of the lion's race fell in the epic forest of the Argonne, funeral honours were paid to his young body. His bravery had made him a host in himself. The eldest brother who is here now, stepped forward to where the dead lay in a long line, bent down, took a handful of earth and said: Thus reviving a custom of our ancient race, on our dear companions who gave their life to free France and their last wish to Italy in her time of trial we drop this fresh earth so that the good may grow. »

The spirit of sacrifice then made itself apparent to a nation already stirred by emotion, and Italy began to prepare; but, before the final plunge, before the declaration of war, and as far back as August 1914, the Minister for Foreign Affairs opened diplomatic negotiations based on clause 7 of the Triple Alliance. This was done with an impartiality and firmness worthy of admiration. From the very beginning, Baron Sonnino made himself the mouthpiece of the national aspirations,

and he told the Italian Ambassador at Vienna to inform the Austrian Government that if these aspirations did not obtain satisfaction, the effect on public opinion would be very serious. This took place Dec. 9, 1914, the day on which actual negotiations were opened. At a later period, Baron Sonnino said : « The great strength of the House of Savoy is that it represents the feeling of the country. » As a matter of fact, these negotiations were directed and inspired by the national sentiment. They failed owing to Austria's unwillingness and through her fault, but it would be an insult to the Italian Government to suggest that it broke off the negotiations because it would not lend itself to a style of bargaining which had failed.

A nation is entitled to defend its interests. It is a good thing that it should defend them, and the special interests of one nation need not necessarily clash with the general interests of civilization and the world's peace. That it was not a question of bargaining is shown by the following passage from an article written by a young Italian, Prezzolini, which appeared in the « Voce » at Florence in December 1914, before the declaration of war and while the negotiations were going on :

« Italy must not make war for Trent and Triest. Everyone thinks I am an Irredentist. I am so little of an Irredentist that even if Austria offered us Trent and Triest, with Istria, Dalmatia and Valona into the bargain, on condition that we did not declare war on the two empires, I think we ought to refuse. If we secured all that, but if, as the result of this, Germany succeeded in crushing France, overthrowing England and subjugating Russia, we should have placed ourselves in a worse position than we occupy at present. We are without Trent and Triest and so forth, but we have our liberty. War is not a question of Irredentism but of Italianism. It must be discussed and settled on the basis of Italy's future. We will not fight for 70,000 Italian Irredentists, but we will fight for 40 millions of Italians. We must look at Trent and Triest

through Italy. It is not a question of planting the Italian flag on San Giusto (the Cathedral at Triest); it is a question of freeing Europe from German domination, which, it will be admitted, is something more important. »

There was something else, also of importance, which the Italians had very much at heart. It exercised a predominant and decisive influence on their war preparations. The enemy made shameless and almost public attempts at corruption. He tried to bribe the Italian Press, to corrupt Parliament and confuse the issues in the public mind, which, however, rose in revolt. The same great poet once more interpreted Italian national sentiment by saying : « We are not, and we refuse to be treated as, a museum, a hotel, a holiday resort, or a piece of scenery, painted in Prussian blue, to be used as a background for international honeymoons. »

Italy is a wonderful country, with marvelous traditions in art, history and politics. The Italians are one of the world's great nations. They cannot be bribed, and perhaps it is because he attempted to bribe them that Prince von Bülow, who showed himself neither an « honest broker » nor a good diplomatist, failed in his disgraceful attempt on the soul of the Italian people.

Italy's participation in the war was eventually brought about by the failure of the negotiations relating to Italy's territorial claims and by the above-mentioned outburst of the national conscience. It was also due to a very noble, very generous and very disinterested sentiment. Of this we have clear proof. Two days before war was declared, this sentiment was expressed by a man who is an old faithful friend of France and has so far overcome his natural modesty as to become a member of the Italian Government. His name is Bissolati. What he said was : « All Italy, from the poorest peasant to the Premier, is living in anxious expectation of victory. We voted for war in May, and to-day we are devoting all our energies to make the war end in victory, because it is the great

and ideal war that will bring about the resurrection of Italy. » The phrase « an ideal war » exactly expresses the situation, and no one could have used it more appropriately than Bissoni. Idealism is very largely accountable for Italy's participation in the war, and it was stimulated, as everyone knows, by the treatment which Germany inflicted on Belgium. It cannot be too often repeated that the Germans are lacking in psychology. They have material force but no moral force, in whatever sense we interpret or accept the expression. They do not take it into account. They have no instinct which tells them to attribute to others the qualities and virtues absent from their own character. They sign a treaty, they confirm it several times, and they assert, only a few months before declaring war, that they will observe it. They pledge their word and give their signature, and as their own baseness tells them that a treaty is only a scrap of paper and that a signature means nothing, they imagine that others have the same mental characteristics! Thus it happens that, when they come in contact with the faultless loyalty and unwavering determination of such a great nation as England, they are taken by surprise. When they see that Italy is slipping from their grasp because they violated Belgian neutrality and made that country the scene of hateful crimes that have cast eternal dishonor on their name, they are again surprised.

Italy, however, was not blind or deaf or lacking in intelligence. During the nine months of her neutrality, she gave a hearing to members of the Belgian Parliament representing all shades of opinion. One of these, Destrees, is a man of rare talent, not only a great artist but a great orator, possessed of a fiery eloquence coming straight from the heart. With him was Lorand, who, speaking in the purest Italian, also had a great influence on his audiences. Destrees is a Liberal and Lorand a Socialist, and another of the men who voiced the wrongs of Belgium was a Roman Catholic, Melot. Not in his religious capacity but as a Belgian and a man, he described the misfor-

tunes of his country and the courage with which they were being endured. He cried out for vengeance and pity. These three men caused a revolution in the mind of Italy. They took hold of the country and urged it on towards its glorious destiny.

Another man, Maeterlinck, a Belgian by birth but a Frenchman by his genius and the purity, power and directness of his style, wrote :

« Up to the last limits of patience and of what could be endured consistently with dignity and the consciousness of its own safety, the Italian Government did everything to spare its people the greatest scourge that can visit any corner of this earth. It held out until it was literally submerged and swept away by the tide of anti-German feeling. I witnessed the rising of this tide. When I came to Milan, in November of last year, to say a few words at a charity festival on behalf of Belgian refugees, the hatred of the German was already accumulating in Italian hearts but had not yet risen to the surface. It broke out in places, but in a timid, circumspect and uncertain way. One felt that it was smouldering in the inmost depths of the national conscience, but it seemed to be feeling its way and gradually coming to a knowledge of itself. When I returned to Italy in March, I was astonished to see the unhoisted-for height to which the all-pervading tide had risen. The holy and necessary hatred, which in this instance is nothing but a magnificent love of justice and humanity, had penetrated everywhere. It showed itself openly in the broad light of day. It responded instantly to the slightest appeal, and it was happy and proud to manifest itself with all the fine and tumultuous ostentation of the South. It was now neutralism that was concealing itself like an objectionable insect. The species had almost vanished. It had been annihilated by the great blast that came from all sides. The Germans were hiding themselves, no one knew where, and, from this point, it was certain that war was inevitable and imminent. »

Here is another quotation. I will not apologize for its

length, because it applies so admirably to the present situation. It is a passage from a speech delivered Nov. 13, 1914, at Milan, on the occasion of a lecture by M. Melot, the Catholic member of Parliament for Namur :

« The question of Belgium deserves to be considered by itself, because it stands for a principle without which no social relations are conceivable—the principle that international law should be based on respect for treaties, just as civil law is based on respect for contracts. Selfish consideration for our country, by which expression our government has defined the Italian programme at this difficult period, should not prevent us from giving a vote conveying a special expression of our sympathy for a brave nation and our fidelity to the higher motives of justice : a vote providing that, whatever be the end of the conflict, the frontiers of Belgium be restored, and also that this right be especially insisted upon by neutral states, because it was in defence of her neutrality that Belgium suffered. » These significant words were uttered by a Roman Catholic, the leader of an important section of the Catholic party in Italy, Signor Meda, who is now a member of the « sacred union » cabinet formed by Signor Boselli.

Events followed fast upon one another, and, May 20, Italy declared war on Austria. Here arises an important question which, it is only just to recognize, has been constantly before public opinion. Everyone in France fully understood the meaning of Italian intervention. Everyone realized that an outburst of offended dignity caused her to declare war on Austria, but some people wondered why her idealism did not also lead her to make war on Germany too. This query has been put very definitely, and an answer must be made to it, but, so as to avoid any suspicion as to the genuineness of the answer, I will borrow it from the great historian Ferrero. In favor of the Allies and of France, he wrote an admirable and prophetic statement in which he avoided precise and direct treatment of this delicate question, but, in matters of this kind,

it is essential to know how to read between the lines and penetrate the meaning of words.

« It can be said that, during the past ten years, everyone had become pro-German in Italy—teachers and manufacturers, socialists and conservatives, freethinkers and bigots, philosophers and musicians. Germany seemed to be taken as a model for everything. German influence was everywhere supreme. Everything was Germanized. »

This is the language of reason, and it was so well understood on the other side of the Alps that several books were written for the purpose of analyzing the causes and origin of this supremacy of Germany in Italy, tracing its development and ascertaining its conditions. When war was declared there were 70,000 Germans in Italy, of whom 40,000 were in Lombardy, the richest manufacturing province in the peninsula. When the position of the banks came to be looked into, it was found that, directly or indirectly, the Germans had taken possession of nearly all the financial concerns in Italy. With their usual cleverness, which is not always so clumsy as we are sometimes told, they certainly tried to hide the real state of affairs; but, in spite of all attempts at concealment, the truth came out. Official documents show that not only the steel, metal and electrical industries, but the mercantile marine were in German hands. An ex-minister—who belonged to the last cabinet and is another old friend of France—Signor Barzilai, ascertained that, in twelve years, Italian exports to Germany increased 47 0/0 while German exports to Italy increased 197 %.

Signor Barzilai also denounced what he called « sham naturalizations ». It is important to remember this expression. We know the system in France. It has been put into practice among us too. It is very simple. It consists of apparently giving up one's original German nationality and becoming a citizen of France or Italy. These newly-naturalized French and Italians had but one object—to betray their adopted coun-

try in the interests of the land of their birth. This kind of treason had been developed to such an extent in Italy that, in the words of Signor Barzilai, the Germans had accomplished the industrial expropriation of Italy. Does not this confirm one of Ferrero's general ideas ?

Here is another idea. A few months before Italy intervened, the Chamber and the Senate were strongly for neutrality, and Ferrero was not afraid to point out, for the second time, that the great majority of University professors had remained faithful to Germany, who was humbly admired as the source of all learning. So much for Parliament and the Universities. With some exceptions, the great bulk of the people had remained unaffected by the pro-German influences, and Signor Ferrero came to this conclusion :

« It must not be overlooked that the question of war is not the same for the government of a country on which war has been forced by a ruthless attack, as it is for the government of a country having deliberately elected to make war for political and national reasons, the value of which is always open to discussion. »

The declaration of war on Austria was so awkward for Germany that Dr von Bethmann-Hollweg one day (and afterwards on several other days) lost his common sense. He asserted that the voice of reason was no longer listened to in Italy, and that the mob had taken control : « The populace reigns supreme, with the complicity and support of the leading members of the Cabinet, whose pockets have been filled by the Triple Entente. The populace has been stirred up to sanguinary excesses by unscrupulous agents of disorder. »

Speaking at the Capitol June 2, 1915, Signor Salandra, the Prime Minister, said : « I tell Italy and the whole of the civilized world, not in violent language but by clear and well-established facts, how our enemies, in their fury, have vainly tried to minimize the high moral and political dignity of the cause which will be made to prevail by our armies. I shall

speak with the serene gravity of which the King of Italy set us a noble example when he called you, his soldiers and sailors, to arms, I shall speak a with due regard for my position and for the place in which I address you. I can afford to disregard the insults in the Imperial, Royal and Archducal proclamations, because I am speaking from the Capitol and because in this solemn moment I represent the people and government of Italy, for which reason, though but a plain citizen, I feel myself much more of a nobleman than the head of the House of Hapsburg. »

Italy's declaration of war on Austria was a direct blow to Germany, and there can be no doubt that Germany felt it as such ; Italy has gone further, and, by adhering to the compact signed in London, she has pledged herself to remain with the Allies to the end.

As regards the Italian army, we must recognize the courage shown by the troops all along the 500-mile front from the Stelvio Pass to the sea. It must be added that, so far as the Trentino part of the line is concerned, the treaty signed in 1886 made the position more difficult for Italy. Elisée Reclus, an entirely disinterested scientist, writing in 1882 without any reference to events now taking place, said : « At first sight, it might be supposed that Italy is well protected all round her northern frontier by the Alps, but this protection is only apparent. The steep and apparently inaccessible side of the mountains is turned towards Italy, but, coming from France, Switzerland and Germanic Austria, the gradients are much easier. Any invader tempted by the delightful climate and immense wealth of Italy could cross the Alpine passes easily enough and then make a rapid descent on the plains. To capture this fine country meant little more than making a rush down the mountain side. The Alpine barrier is, in reality, a barrier to the Italians themselves and to no others. »

The Italians have crossed this barrier. They have overcome the difficulties presented by the curious nature of the ground

in the Carso. It does not look very hilly at first sight, but it is made up of soft clay, into which a man sinks easily, and of rocks that can only be attacked by mining, with the Austrians at close quarters. At the outset, the Italians succeeded in carrying the war into the enemy's country. They climbed up 9,000 feet into the Carnia mountains, where they stayed all through the winter in spite of nearly thirty degrees of frost. They have reached the top of the Dolomites, dragging their guns behind them with prodigious courage and tenacity. In the Trentino they have done their best to destroy the numerous fortifications which the Austrians have been building in this part of mountains ever since 1866. During the uncertainty that followed the Austrian offensive, they showed admirable self-control. They realized the national necessity of their effort, and, when Italian territory was invaded, when some mountains were taken and some villages captured by the Austrians, when, in short, the Italians saw that an invasion was beginning, they became conscious of the danger with which their country was threatened. What had already occurred in Russia, England and France then took place in Italy.

With the exception of a very small minority, all Italians have done their national duty. The whole country has shown a fine spirit, and the army has been worthy of the country. The officers have invariably spoken well of their soldiers, and those from the southern provinces have exceptionally distinguished themselves by their spirit of self-sacrifice. At the present moment the whole of Italy is in the war. Italy's effort has already produced considerable results, and this effort will be continued and extended. While it is only justice to acknowledge the services of Baron Sonnino, who spoke the fateful words that placed Italy side by side with the Allies in the struggle for right, justice and humanity, we must also pay our tribute to the illustrious Premier, Signor Salandra, who courageously declared war on Austria and subsequently bore the burden of events with a firmness, an elevation of ideas and an impassibility

admired by the whole world. With the ex-Premier, Signor Salandra, we must associate the venerated name of the present Premier, Signor Boselli. He also has a great past which inspires confidence in Italy, France and her allies. The report on Signor Salandra's request for war credits was presented to the Italian Parliament May 20, 1915, by Signor Boselli. He said : « This assembly, the first elected by the will of the people, is entitled to enforce the noble principle of respect for nationalities. Let your vote be the clearest possible proof of our invincible strength, of the holiness of our right and the purity of our ideal. The flag of Italy and of Victor Emmanuel will soon float proudly over all Italian territories, and the whole people of Italy will be one in heart and ideal. »

This was a correct expression of the position. An ideal has placed the Italian people on the side of the Allies.

A few weeks ago, a former Premier of Italy, Signor Luzzatti, wrote these admirable lines :

« How could we have joined the aggressors, and how could we not have made common cause with those who were fighting for liberty? Could we remain insensible to the sufferings of the Belgians, the Serbs, the Poles, the Armenians, the people of Trent, Istria, Dalmatia, Alsace and Lorraine? If we had, there would have been civil war in Italy. The shades of Mazzini, Victor Emmanuel II, Cavour and Garibaldi, all the council of Italian-born gods who still control the country's destiny, would have risen up and reproached us with our cowardice. And our neutrality would not have saved us from the vengeance of our former allies, who accused us of treachery because we would not follow their example of oppressing free peoples. No remorse is permissible, no doubt is honest, and no hesitation is tolerable while men are fighting, at Verdun and in the Upper Astico, for the world's civilization. »

Undoubtedly there are tremendous issues at stake at Verdun and in the Upper Astico, and in Russia too, and the stake is nothing less than human civilization itself.

Signor Tittoni, when Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1906, said : « Who, without feelings of horror, could face the terrible prospect of a war among the great European powers ? Who, without subjecting himself to life-long remorse, would lightly expose his country to an unnecessary war ? If, unhappily, a war should break out among the great Powers, the consequences, I consider, could be described only as the bankruptcy of Europe. »

Signor Tittoni is one of the most intelligent, decided and clear-sighted men in Italy, but, in 1906, he could not foresee to what depths of crime Germany would sink. Her mad pride, her greed and her thirst for supremacy let loose the scourge. The war is not the bankruptcy of Europe; it is the bankruptcy of Germany. Germany is bankrupt in respect for her treaties and her plighted word; she is bankrupt in honor.

The Allies, armed by right and justice, are the liquidators of this monstrous and fraudulent bankruptcy. At last they have Germany by the throat, and they will not let her go. They will compel her to render an account, so that they can draw up a statement of her acts of treachery, rapine and crime, pave the way to legitimate restitution and necessary compensation, restore sovereignty to dispossessed nations, and give back the rights and homes of martyred peoples. The Allies must insist on a full reckoning for all these things, and they must go on to the end. The blood of those who were slaughtered in hundreds of thousands cries out for it. It is necessary for Europe, which can only obtain lasting freedom, an established balance of power, and safety, at this price. Finally, and above all things, it is necessary for humanity, which would be dishonored in history if implacable, inexorable and pitiless chastisement did not fall on crowned robbers, frightened or debased parliaments, treacherous and criminal diplomats, armies of thieves, incendiaries and murderers, and on the peoples that have foolishly allowed themselves to be enslaved and were too cowardly to refuse to be accomplices.

APPENDIX

*Speech delivered at the Sorbonne, Paris, June 22, 1916, by
M. Anatole France, of the French Academy, on the occasion
of M. Louis Barthou's lecture.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

We are here to pay a solemn tribute to Italy in the presence of the youth of our schools, but we should first of all give respectful greeting to the Italian Ambassador, who is with us here to-day and, by his presence, has brought Italy herself among us. No one could personify her better, in our eyes, than the illustrious statesman whose policy did much to bring about the now accomplished union of his country with England, Russia and France. We applaud him to-day in this august Sorbonne just as he was applauded in the diplomatic gallery of our Chamber of Deputies during that historic period in May 1915, when, amid the cheers of the Romans, the Capitol bell rang out to the world the tidings that Italy was taking up arms in a just cause.

At this meeting, in honor of our Latin sister, I am glad to find myself with my friend Louis Barthou, and in communion with him. We both have the same faith, and yet each of us remains himself. We are both here with the same heartfelt motive. We have sacrificed none of our old convictions—if we had, it would not have been to our credit—but we are closely united against the enemy.

I will not dwell on the painful sacrifice Louis Barthou has uncomplainingly made to his country. He would not let me

do so when so many other fathers and so many mothers unknown to us have given the dearest and best of their offspring. Neither would he let me tell you with what fiery zeal, what persistent labor, what complete self-denial, what oratorical talent and intellectual power he has served his country during these two long and terrible years, both as a member of Parliament and as a private citizen. I may at least refer to his visits to Italy, where he successfully advocated the cause of France and whence he has brought back strong and reassuring impressions. Like you, I am anxious to hear what he has to say, and therefore I will convey as briefly as possible to beautiful Italy the gratitude and admiration of a Frenchman who has loved her all his life—for her nature and her genius, for her hills crowned with cypresses, for her mountains lying in the shadow of their turpentine trees or bare under the golden sunshine, mountains whose names alone are enough to stir the hearts of those who can feel; who loves her for her harmonious seashore, her lakes, her sea and the divine smile of her skies, her marble cities and her villages that stand up, as proudly as citadels, on their rocky heights; who loves her for her poets, her musicians, her artists, her historians and her men of science, for her distant past with all its marvelous grandeur and her more recent past, still quivering from the struggles of the « *risorgimento* » which will soon lead to victory; who loves her with all the transports of passion, all the delights of voluptuousness and all the meditations of philosophy.

Thus is Italy loved in France, and the proof of this attachment can be found in the painful surprise we felt over the political and economic differences which at one time existed between the two countries. It was with great satisfaction that we observed, at the beginning of the war, that Italy by refusing to become an accomplice in an unjust aggression and by denouncing the Triple Alliance, had given us a foretaste of her friendship in the form of security for our southern frontier. With what joy did we learn that she was to fight on our side! There was

cause not only to rejoice but to admire Italy, for war was not forced upon her as it was on us. I would rather say it was made incumbent upon her by a sense of justice and regard for her future. She entered upon war, not because she thought it a safe and easy proposition, but, on the contrary, foreseeing that it would be long and terrible, she held it to be wise and necessary. From that day she has waged it with a resolute and tranquil mind and with indomitable courage, in close and sincere union with us.

In December Italy signed the London agreement, thus pledging herself not to lay down her arms before the Entente Powers, and she also assured Belgium that she would not give up the struggle so long as a single yard of Belgian territory was trodden by the invader. She has proclaimed, through her most eminent statesmen, that she is resolved to carry on the war with all her strength, at no matter what cost, until she has realized her holiest hopes, helped her allies to enforce respect for international rights, and made sure that every country shall in future enjoy the independence, safety and mutual respect which alone can restore peace to the universe. When this great task is accomplished, peace will shine like the sun upon the world, and we shall see the accomplishment of the wish expressed by Signor Tittoni, the eminent man who personifies Italy with us here to-day. He said : « I hope the peace obtained by victory will not be a peace but *the* peace, purified from all germs of future wars and firmly established on the principle of nationalities and international justice. »

This is the meaning of the compact by which Italy pledged herself to us. These are the generous conditions of her generous assistance. Can we imagine that vain praise and empty salutations will discharge our obligations towards her? No. In quieter times, when we have returned to the labors of the soil, of manufactures and of arts, we will remember that, all along the line from the Stelvio to the Isonzo, around peaks covered with eternal snow and along the gorges swept by the

icy mountain winds, gallant blood was shed for the common cause. We are Italy's friends in war, and we will remain her friends in peace. We will not allow economic hostilities to follow brotherhood in arms. We will find out a way to reconcile the commercial, industrial and financial interests of the two countries, and we will both unite in destroying those barriers of figures that are sometimes as cruel in peace as barbed wire is in war.

Ladies, gentlemen, and you young men who will long enjoy the fruits of the peace that will have cost such great efforts and terrible sacrifices, never forget that your fathers, allied to that noble and refined country Italy, and allied to nearly all civilized Europe, did not fight for prey, like the barbarians, or for insolent and cruel supremacy, like our adversaries, but for liberty against tyranny, for justice against iniquity, for pledged faith against treachery, for peace against war. Let the example of the conquered (for we can now consider our enemies as such) preserve you from the brutal pride that has been their undoing, from immoderate desires and from contempt for the weak! Let their ruin teach you reason and justice, and show you that force, without wisdom, is its own destruction.

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